

25th Anniversary of Advocacy Day Brings Virginia Delegate to Radford

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On Monday, September 29th, Virginia Del. **Jason Ballard** visited campus to attend the Student Government Associations general body meeting to present an official House of Delegates commending resolution.

The resolution regarding Radford University's 25th Anniversary of Advocacy Day. During the meeting, student leaders, faculty, and **President Danilowicz**, sat in attendance of the presentation and had the opportunity to represent and celebrate the significant meaning and importance of Advocacy Day. The resolution honors Radford Universities' participation in Advocacy Day and shows its growth over the course of twenty-five years. In the year 2000, three students traveled to Richmond, where now, more than 50 students attend the trip to meet with legislators and advocates for the university. Ballard shared,

"When I talk to my colleagues in the General Assembly, they are continually impressed by Radford's strong showing during each year's legislative session due to not only the time commitment involved in getting to Richmond, but also with how prepared students are to advocate for policies in a professional manner. This is a true testament to Rad-



Student Government photo featuring Del. Ballard (far left) President Danilowicz (far right) and SGA President Owen Starr holding the resolution Photo Credits: radford.edu

ford University as an institution that prepares students with the skills necessary to succeed after they graduate."

SGA President Owen Starr had the opportunity to welcome Del. Ballard to campus and received a copy of the commending resolution. Starr expresses the importance of civic engagement and attending Advocacy Day. "I've been attending Advocacy Day for 2 years now, this will be my third year. I've loved it because it's a great experience for meeting the legislators that are representing you, advocating for students, advocating for Radford, great networking opportunities, learning about how these politicians and people who work in government got to the positions they are in, and also the fact they are willing to hear what students like us have to say and the issues we are facing."

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The 2025 Advocacy Day application is now open to full-time students on RU Involved; applications are due by Monday, October 27, 2025, at 11:59 p.m. Advocacy Day will be on Wednesday, February 4th, 2026. Participating students will leave campus on the morning of Tuesday, February 3rd, 2026, to travel to Richmond and arrive back on campus the evening of February 4th. **Dr. Susan Trageser**, who provided these details expressed “Whether a student is participating for the first time or their fourth, **Advocacy Day is a wonderful way for students to learn about legislative processes in Virginia and engage with state legislators and University administrators.** Students also find community and develop lasting friendships through Advocacy Day.”

Del. Ballard’s presentation honored the importance of this opportunity for Radford University students. **President Danilowicz** shared his gratitude to Ballard for his constant support of Radford. **“I am grateful to Delegate Ballard for honoring this milestone for Advocacy Day, a hallmark of the student experience at Radford University. Each of the more than 600 students participating has returned to our campus with a stronger voice, deeper confidence, and a renewed commitment to service.”**

This yearly event gives students the opportunity to advocate for themselves and Radford University. With continuous support and participation, Advocacy Day is an engaging program that continues to grow each year.

Delegate Jason Ballard and
SGA President Owen Starr
Photo Credit: radford.edu



Opinion: The Government Has Shut Down, What Comes Next?

By: NICOLAS LEON GUZMAN
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The Government has shut down. Now, why does the government shut down every now and then? Both parties must agree on a bill that funds the government service agencies provided to the public. Even though Republicans control the executive, legislative, and judicial branches, they will need 60 votes in the Senate to pass a bill. Therefore, the bill would have to be passed in a bipartisan manner. With the little negotiating power they had, the Democrats would've voted on the deal if a reversal of the cuts made to Medicaid were to happen, to prevent cuts to government health agencies in the future, and to extend a tax credit that makes health insurance more affordable for millions of Americans. However, the republicans refused, and so our government shut down. **What impact will this have on our country and everyday lives?**

Those who will be the main impact will be all the workers who will be furloughed, meaning be sent home on unpaid leave. That will be: 89% of the environmental protective agency, 87% of the educational department, 81% of the commerce department, 76% of our labor department, 71% of our housing and development department, 59% of our energy department, 49% of our agricultural department and potentially **750,000 more workers will be furloughed in a few weeks or maybe days**. Now, some may think, "Oh well, that's just a free vacation for them," however, our government functions because of those agency workers, and if they're gone, things will slow down tremendously.

Now, jobs like police, firefighters, and doctors were not furloughed because they are essential jobs, so they will continue to function. However, even those essential jobs will feel the effects because they will not be getting paid till the shutdown ends. If you are traveling by plane, you will see a slowdown in travel because TSA agents, air traffic controllers, and other airport workers will call in sick as they won't be seeing a check anytime soon.



Photo Edit by Brandon Whitaker

The last time Congress passed a budget on time was back in 1997. Since then, they have relied on continuing resolutions, which means using last year's budget for the current year. Throughout the year, lawmakers add bills to the budget and vote on it the next year. One important part of the budget set to expire soon is the ACA tax credits, which help millions get health insurance. **If these expire, about 4.2 million Americans could lose coverage.**

Recently, the Bureau of Labor Statistics reported that the job market in the ADP industry is getting weaker. They expected 50,000 new jobs, but instead, 32,000 private jobs were lost—a difference of 82,000. The jobs report was supposed to be released on Friday, but the shutdown means it will be delayed. If the economy looks weak, it could hurt President Trump's popularity and cost Republicans votes as elections get closer.

The shutdown will likely go through the voting season. The strategy will be that republicans either continue the government shutdown through the voting season so the democrats lose favor and lose seats in Congress, or pass a bill that continues the government's duties if the shutdown negatively impacts the republicans in the voting run. The shutdown is a gain for the politicians while a loss for the average Americans.

A New Era for RU Men's Basketball: 2025-2026 Season Preview, Commentary from Jon Rothstein, & Coach Zach Chu

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On Tuesday, September 30th, the Radford University Men's Basketball team held an open practice as an opportunity for fans to preview the team's upcoming season. The practice was followed by commentary from CBS college basketball reporter **Jon Rothstein**, who is currently on a pre-season tour across the country. He spoke about the current state of college basketball, and the potential that Radford holds in the upcoming season. **"Seeing the product that's going to be on the floor this year for Radford, I can easily say in 20 years covering college basketball, I have never seen a program at Radford have the caliber of talent that you are going to have this season."** Rothstein said, following the practice. It is clear there is an immense amount of talent on the team this season.

All 15 players, 14 of them being new recruits to the team, exemplified chemistry & competitiveness on the court last Tuesday. But Rothstein highlighted the fact that to ultimately succeed as a team, there needs to be more than just pure talent. There must be support from the community. He stated, "The caliber of player and the caliber of talent that you will have associated with your team is going to be directly correlated to the efforts around everyone supporting the program and the university."

Coach Zachary Chu is also extremely focused on heightening support from the Radford community. He and the team have been working incredibly hard on and off the court to build a team that the university will be proud of. Coach Chu has made it clear that he values the student-centric nature of Radford University. "This is the most student-centered place I've ever been in," said Chu. It is extremely evident that he and his team are trying to create a high-energy environment on our home court this season., but simply winning games isn't their only priority. When asked to give one message to students, Chu said **"We want to create an environment here that ultimately helps us win games, but to be transparent, we want to create**



Original photos via @radfordhoops on Instagram, Edit by: Brandon Whitaker

an environment here that people love to be involved in and be a part of." Students getting involved with the program, coming out to support the team at games, as well as connecting with players off the court, can contribute directly to the success of the team. Coach Chu is extremely proud of this season's team and staff, describing them as "high integrity, high quality, and highly competitive," and hopes to share that pride with the rest of the Radford University community.

There are numerous ways to be involved & connected with the men's basketball program this season. Information and highlights can be found via the Radford University Athletics website, as well as on social media. Live game coverage is also available on Radford University's public radio station, WVRU, and highlights are available every week in the Tartan. The team will also be tabling outside the Student Recreation & Wellness center on Thursdays. The most prominent and effective mode of support, though, is attending games and cheering on the team in person. Something extremely special about Radford University is the strong & supportive community, and as Rothstein said Tuesday night, **"There has never been a time in college athletics where it can be more exciting to be a part of something."**

Beloved Influencer Zuza Beine Tragically Passes Away

By: AVA LONGMATE
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Beloved TikTok and Instagram star, Zuza Beine was known fondly by many because of her documentation of her journey through acute myeloid leukemia. On Monday, September 22nd, this fourteen-year-old superstar tragically passed away. Through her 11 year journey, her experiences and beloved makeup tutorials shared great awareness to children and families suffering with similarly abusive diseases and the effects they play on each of their lives.

As we approach October, breast cancer awareness month, it is important to highlight important figures that allow struggling voices to be heard. Zuza Beine spent most of her life riddled with pain from her ever growing cancer, and spent more time in hospital beds than any fourteen-year-old should. But despite this, she remained a shining star until the end.

Zuza was first diagnosed with acute myeloid leukemia (AML) at age 3 and had been sharing the details of her treatment with 2.1 million followers on her “zuzas_way_to_healing” Instagram account. Her videos were boldly unfiltered about her experiences, and she showcased the heartbreaking effect that cancer plays on such a young person. She shared moments of great pain and sorrow as her aggressive treatments caused her more pain than anyone her age should ever have to go through. She went through three bone marrow transplants, which in the last ten years only 30 kids have had to undergo this incredibly aggressive procedure. And after four unsuccessful medical trials, and three relapses some say Zuza became the strongest fourteen-year-old.

Despite having more than enough reasons to lose hope, she always wore a dazzling smile and had something sweet to say about her fami-

ly, friends, and everything in her life that she feels grateful for being a part of. She was a participant of Glow House, a content creation group for young creators and documented trips and content creator friends that she made in her journey as her social media accounts began to skyrocket. In a video posted to Beine’s accounts just two days before the

announcement of her death, **Zuza shared some of the things she was most grateful for in the wake of her cancer diagnosis, including “being able to taste the most delicious foods” and “being able to do different hair-styles.”**

Her family recaps about her journey through cancer and how despite everything she had to go through, she still lived the fullest life she could; **“But what made her life so beautiful was how she**

learned to face the hardest circumstances, like her disease, and still live fully.” Zuza’s journey is just one of millions regarding how cancer can put families through absolute hell, and a lot of the time they don’t come back from it. They could go through years of sleepless nights, and celebrate birthdays like they were the most precious day of the year. Because to these families, seeing another year with them is a gift. So if you know someone whose family has experience going through cancer treatments for themselves or someone special to them. Know that those people have gone through a hell the rest of us could never imagine. **We should all interact with the world the way Zuza did, that despite our adversities we continue to see the light in life and be thankful for all of the little things. The world lost another glowing soul, but her message will be felt for years to come.**



Zuza Beine Photo Credit: @zuzas_way_to_healing

Opinion: Super Bowl Halftime Performer Announcement Leaves Internet Divided

By: LACEY BANKS

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On Sunday, September 28th the NFL announced Bad Bunny as the Apple Music Super Bowl LX Halftime Show performer. Bunny recently released an album called *DeBÍ TiRAR Más FOTOS* on January 5th of this year. His recent album is one of the top 5 best-selling albums of the year and led to a world tour.

While many Americans appreciate Bunny's music, due to current politics and the state of the world, the announcement of his Super Bowl performance has caused a controversy.

Many conservatives believe that Bad Bunny should not perform because many of his songs are not in English, and because he is not "American." This second statement is FALSE.

Bad Bunny, aka Benito Antonio Martínez Ocasio, was born in Bayamón, Puerto Rico. Following the Spanish-American War in 1898, Puerto Rico was acquired by the United States, and since 1917, those born in Puerto Rico are U.S. citizens. The same goes for those born in Guam after 1950.

Guam and Puerto Rico are both U.S. territories, meaning although they cannot vote in the presidential election, because they are not states, whoever the current president is, controls them.

To add on to the controversy surrounding Bunny's Super Bowl performance, the Department of Homeland Security, Secretary Krisit Noem said,



Bad Bunny Photo Credit: John Nacion/Variety

“[ICE] will be all over that place,”

and that she has every intention to “enforce the law.”

Noem's statement is racist, and disgusting, especially when you think about Bunny's fan base demographic, and the fact that many conservatives believe that he is not American and doesn't belong here.

Another thing, many of Bad Bunny's songs are in Spanish, but that does not mean that he does not deserve to perform, and that fans should not be able to experience it. If you cannot understand Spanish, that is on you. It is not his job to change for you.

Just like the last year's Super Bowl Halftime Show performer, Kendrick Lamar, his set was created for the Black community, not for the appeal of white audiences.

If you had a problem with Lamar's performance, and see something wrong with Bunny performing, you are the problem.

Opinion: Embrace Radical Empathy

By: TALLY HOLLAND
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The first night in the hospital wasn't the worst. But it was close. As the needle went in, I held my mother's hand tightly—nothing could have broken that grip. More than a year later and I've still got the scar. That night was just the start of a year-long recovery process. One that I still feel the effects of today. I've had two surgeries, a couple blood clots, and several strokes. **Statistically speaking, I shouldn't be alive. The fact is, I survived only because of the kindness and empathy of a handful of people. I will never forget that.**

There is much to despair in our world: injustice, pain, grief. With each new day, we become more and more isolated. This is not accidental. The people in power want this. They need us to be alone, scared, and blind to the fact that we outnumber them. But we have a secret weapon: radical empathy.

In her 2021 book, *Radical Empathy*, Terri Givens outlines several steps to her philosophy. The first, and perhaps most important step, is a willingness to be vulnerable. **Empathy will only exist if you let it. So, let it flourish.** Next, be open to the experiences of others. You live in a world where you may not understand or agree with the person next to you. Embrace it. To quote Whitman: "Be curious, not judgemental." Finally: take action. Empathy alone is not enough. Ask someone how they're doing, go to protests, be a shoulder to cry on.

Change is possible—even if you believe it is not. Radical empathy isn't a new idea. In fact, I guarantee you have practiced it at some point in your life. It's what has allowed humans to thrive for thousands of years. The human ability to care for others is a gift—one that should be celebrated and nurtured. Sometimes I wonder if recovery was worth it. But then I think of the people who saved my life: Jill, Amy, Trevor, and so many more. They showed me an impossible kindness. Their strength has become my strength. To me, empathy isn't optional. It is an act of survival and defiance. Because in a world such as ours, with unimaginable cruelty and suffering, caring is always the right thing to do.

Radford Shawarma and Grill Opens on Main Street

By: KATHERINE CLARKE
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In a college town where students are used to choosing between pizza, burgers, or 7-Eleven taquitos, global cuisine is hard to come by - until now. **Radford Shawarma and Grill just arrived on Radford's dining scene**, filling a cultural and culinary gap.

While our area has a lot to offer, the dining options are not the most diverse. With the opening of this new restaurant on Main Street, (1154 E Main St) students and locals can now experience a taste of the Mediterranean.

Radford Shawarma and Grill opened its doors to customers on Friday, Sept. 26th and has already received a warm welcome from the community. It is a family run business with authentic recipes from Jordan and Syria. Everything on the menu is made in-house with fresh ingredients, and food safety and cleanliness are top priorities.. The portions and prices are reasonable, making it a great option for college students. **A 15% student discount is also offered when students show their OneCards at the counter.**

Khalaf, the owner, insists that if you try one thing on the menu, it should be the fresh shawarma. **"When most people try shawarma they aren't having the real thing,"** he said. **"We have the real thing."** In a town with limited options, the staff at Radford Shawarma and Grill take pride in "bringing something new to the locals".

Things have been running smoothly since opening, and the staff is eager for students to come try their food and share feedback on anything that might need improvement. With Radford Shawarma and Grill settling in on Main Street, students finally have a fresh alternative and a taste of something new in Radford.



Photo Credit: Katherine Clarke

Highlander Highlights: Volleyball Gets First Conference Win vs. Winthrop, Women's Soccer Win Streak Continues

By: BRANDON WHITAKER

Volleyball

Freshman Olivia Ryno Scores 22 Kills in Dominant 3-2 Win vs. Winthrop

Following a 0-3 loss against Gardner Webb University, their second consecutive conference loss, Head Volleyball Coach Savanna Hammond and the Highlanders knew they had to make changes for a shot at competing in the Big South. In the first three sets, it seemed the Winthrop Eagles would keep the Highlanders anchored at the bottom of the Big South, building commanding leads and taking a 2-1 advantage. Late in set four, after an attack error from Radford tied the score at 17, freshman **Olivia Ryno** refused to fold. She answered with a kill that sparked a streak of six unanswered points, and eventually scored the 25th kill to tie the match. In the decisive fifth set, Ryno was unstoppable, racking up seven of her 22 kills and forcing the final attack



error that sealed the Highlanders' victory. The Lady Highs will return to the Dedmon Center for a doubleheader, taking on Presbyterian on Friday at 4:00 pm and Charleston Southern on Saturday at 2:00 pm.



#11 Olivia Ryno surrounded by her teammates in a previous match vs. High Point Photo Credits: Jack Buckner

Women's Soccer

Highlanders Take Down Spartans in Battle of Big South Unbeatens, Increase Win Streak to Three

The Spartans from USC Upstate visited Radford University last weekend for a women's soccer match at Cupp Stadium. Two undefeated teams atop the conference standings and one of them had to leave with their first L. The game was stagnant in the first half, despite eight first half shots from the Spartans. However, two minutes after leaving their locker room at half-time the Spartans found the back of the net and took a 1-0 lead. It was then **Lilly Short** that received a pass from **Amani Green** and tied the game 1-1 with a header in the 66th minute. In minute 78 it was once again senior defender **Amani Green** helping the Highs' offense rifling a penalty kick past the Spartan goalkeeper to secure the lead and eventually the win.